SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

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Email: info@saronlutheran.org
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Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
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Marcus Roll, Music Director
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Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
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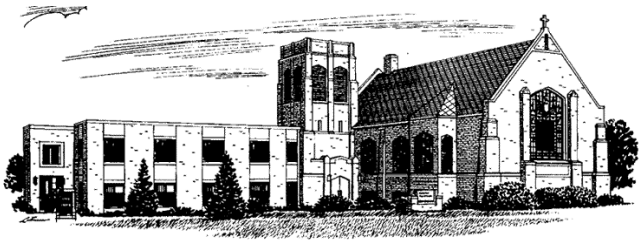
Bradley717@gmail.com
Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Typical Sunday at Saron:
Summer of 2022 (beginning June 5):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

Fall, Winter and Spring (beginning Sept 11):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40 Learning Hour for Ages 2-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*



PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR JUNE 2022

Last evening I attended the first of the two (identical) bias trainings that Saron is offering. We had some good and insightful discussions about our conscious and unconscious biases and power structures. We could have easily extended the conversation.

Our conversation ended with us pondering the question, regarding power in our faith community, "Who is being burdened or harmed?" To think with intentionality about how we navigate all the facets of power (people, actions, wealth, and ideas) is helpful and necessary for the health of the community. I welcome more conversation about this.

June is Pride Month. As a Reconciling in Christ Congregation who "*joyfully shares God's love for all, and believes our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity*" as stated in our welcome statement, I invite us to take time to explore this question, as presented by Reconciling Works. "In understanding the ways in which we all are Made in God's Image, how can we learn to care and advocate for one another so we can best see God's Boundless Diversity of creation?"

Thank you for joining in the conversation and the work of extending God's love for all.

-Pastor Joan

May 29 – September 4
10am Worship on-location & via Zoom
No Learning Hour

General Information

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Always watch weekly emails and door signage for the current protocols. As of printing, we are encouraging masks but are no longer requiring them. Nursery workers and communion assistants will wear masks.

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan and/or Vicar Patrick
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:15am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Richard Schalon is at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center in St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman; **Kathleen Preston** is at Woodland Terrace in St. Joseph.

Happy June Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

6/2 Ann Dosch
6/3 Steven Hall
6/3 Charles Hoch
6/4 June Embree
6/5 Judi Huff
6/5 Rebecca Schmidt
6/6 Danielle Hohman
6/6 Dale Lucy
6/7 Nicholas Maly
6/7 Elinor Van Egmond
6/11 Maeva Bommarito
6/11 Tyler Cook
6/12 Charles Kohs
6/12 Stephania Ngonyani
6/12 Cynthia Schmidt
6/12 Deborah Vollmer
6/15 Hunter Zwar
6/16 Marilyn Frey
6/18 James Peterson
6/18 Rebeccah Strine
6/20 Cami Vitek
6/22 Lanette Mannisto
6/22 Larry Weber
6/23 Christopher Cox
6/26 Phillip Preston
6/27 Carol Hafer
6/29 David Young
6/30 Dena Nesbitt

Happy June Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

6/1 Brian & Coanne Hohman
6/2 Deanna & Robert Deaton
6/12 Lindsay & Scott Gaspari
6/14 June & Gene Embree
6/16 Kathie & Dave Bradley
6/17 Kathy & Gary Cowall
6/17 Joan & James Oleson
6/19 Allen & Diana Dubman
6/21 Dan & Sue Fortenbacher
6/25 Richard & Dawn Osgood
6/26 Joyce & Andrew Marquardt
6/26 Robert Gulley & Kirsten Talbert
6/27 Claire & Kyle Carter
6/28 Gayle & James Peterson
6/30 Don & Carol Hafer
6/30 Janet & William Oleson

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

CONGRATULATIONS

We welcomed Elijah Nicholas to the Lord's table on May 1 as he partook his first communion. Congratulations, Elijah!

Ilo Coar will be graduating from Saint Joseph High School in June. He plans to attend Ball State University in the fall to study Finance. Congratulations and best wishes, Ilo!

A NOTE FROM THE VICAR

This year, I celebrate my 26th anniversary of becoming Lutheran. Growing up in a different faith tradition, Susan and I quickly came to love all things Lutheran. While it took some work to feel comfortable with liturgy, it didn't take long for us to get very excited about the music.

I still recall feeling chills (literally) the first time I heard "Lift High the Cross." It has become, without a doubt, my favorite song in the hymnal. As we complete this Easter season, the lyrics keep going through my head: "Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, til all the world adore his sacred name."

It seems like everywhere we turn there is conflict of one sort or another. I wonder what the world would be like if the love of Christ really did permeate the hearts of minds of people who are at odds with each other. We could sing boldly "So shall our song of triumph ever be, praise to the Crucified for the victory."

May the love of Christ be felt throughout our community, our country and the world at large. Peace - Vicar Patrick

FORTIFY & fly

Installing the new sanctuary seating was a very visual, *and comfortable*, display of progress but rest assured, other projects are moving ahead too! The technology team is still working towards making our Zoom capabilities more robust while also becoming less distracting to those in the building. The worship enhancement team is continuing their work with possible considerations of new sanctuary flooring and also investigating how to make the chancel area more accessible. Lastly, we've begun work with a website designer to overhaul Saron website as part of our identified goal of focusing on brand awareness. Always something going on behind the scenes! We'll pass on more details as they become available.

At the end of April 2022, we had collected an additional $780 for a total of $375,547 towards our pledge total of $367,205. If you have a pledge to fulfill or simply wish to continue giving, we're happy to accept it. As always, thank you for your support!

Worship

Are you interested in becoming a member of Saron or learning more about the faith from the Lutheran perspective? If so, contact Pastor Joan.

NURSERY

Nursery service is available during the service. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that occasionally need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex. There are also clipboards with coloring pages, as well as children's bulletins, to assist kids as they transition into participating in worship. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages in our congregation and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families negotiating life with children. We recognize that may not

look the same for all and encourage concerns and suggestions.

For health and safety reasons, only the approved childcare providers assigned for that day should be in the nursery space during worship. Nursing mothers are always welcome!

PRAYER GROUP

Join us Mondays at 11am for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship or via other means. We meet in the sanctuary.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Zoom fellowship at 11am as long as there is interest. The link remains the same each week and is at the bottom of the email sent on Thursdays.

ALTAR FLOWERS

You can sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by calling the church office. Make sure to note any special occasion to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Please follow up with a check to Saron with "Flowers" on the memo line. Thank you for helping to beautify our worship services! Feel free to take them home after the last service to enjoy. **Please return the vase to Saron to be reused.**

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

June 5: Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Romans 8:14-17
John 14:8-27

June 12: The Holy Trinity
Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31
Psalm 8 (2)
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

June 19: Second Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 65:1-9
Psalm 22:19-28 (22)
Galatians 3:23-29
Luke 8:26-39

June 26: Third Sunday after Pentecost
1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21
Psalm 16 (8)
Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Luke 9:51-62

Mark your calendars for summer youth group (grades 6-12) gatherings being planned for the evenings of **June 22 and July 20** with location to be announced. Also, we are planning a community-based service project this summer. Stay tuned for further details. We look forward to seeing you. Friends are always welcome!

Contact Merrily at merrilyannsmith@gmail.com with any questions.

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

With our summer schedule, the Learning Hour takes a break until after Labor Day. Watch for special experiences, such as Vacation Bible School.

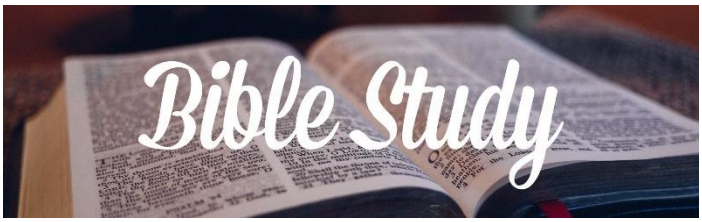
In the Fall, we will offer a time of age-appropriate Bible studies between the two services, from **9:40-10:30:**

- **Grades 5 and Under** meet in the Sunday school classroom.
- **Confirmation Students** (Grades 6-8) meet in the confirmation classroom.
- **Adult Forum** meets in the upstairs lounge.

We look forward to seeing everyone when classes resume!

Mark your calendars! We are planning our 2022 Saron Vacation Bible School experience for **Monday, August 1 through Thursday, August 4**. There will be stories, crafts, snacks, activities, music and more! Preschool to 5th grade welcome. Registration will be available in July.

Note: We will need volunteers to make this VBS event possible so if this is up your alley, let us know you want to be involved!



TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

We plan to continue meeting all summer. Join us for a time of study and fellowship on Tuesday evenings at 6pm in the upstairs lounge. Around 7pm, we'll adjourn to a local restaurant for more discussion but with food and drink. All are welcome!

"Iron Sharpens Iron and One Person Sharpens the Wits of Another"

If you have any questions about this group, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Beginning June 2 at 9:30am, the summer Bible study takes a bit of a different focus. The study is a little more informal and focuses on the Gospel lesson for the coming Sunday. The format is that of the African Bible study, where the text is read from different Scripture translations with reflection. We will meet outside (weather permitting) at the main entrance off the alley. Zoom will still be available.

Please let Pastor know if you ever have any questions. **This class is open to all interested in attending.** You are welcome to join any time, for one session or for many.

Here is the list of our selections for good reads and even better discussions for 2022-2023. Make note of this and plan to join us for all or any of these books that spark your interest. You can check Amazon or any other source you favor to get a complete review of these books.

October 2, 2022	The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles
November 6, 2022	One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot by Mariane Cronin
December 4, 2022	Still Life by Sarah Winman
February 5, 2023	Factfulness; Ten Reasons We 're Wrong About The World and Why Things Are Better Than You Think by Hans Rosling
March 5, 2023	The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd
April 2 2023	Strength in What Remains by Tracy Kidder
May 7, 2023	The Violin Conspiracy by Brendon Slocumb

"Reading is breathing for the mind." - breviewer.com

MEN'S MONTHLY DEVOTION

We will not have the Saturday monthly devotion/breakfast in June or July. Hopefully, we'll start up again in August or September.

Contact Dennis Lundgren with any questions at dennis.lundgren@me.com

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

We will meet at 7pm on Wednesday, June 8 at Saron in the lounge. Zoom will also be available (link will be emailed close to the meeting date). Study leader will be Mary Alice Brunner. The study lesson information from Gather will be sent later.

Contact Melanie McCammon at 269/449-8399 for more information about this group.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex after the service? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month.
These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger.
Thank you for your generous offerings!

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy. – Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On April 28, Saron members Marilyn Frey, Jan Taylor, Wendy King & Kathie Bradley were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing and packing 140 sack lunches for guests of the Soup Kitchen. The lunches included cookies provided by Kathie Anserello, Sally Schmuhl, Keith Stevens, Anne Dosch & Katie Hooper's students

After 2 years of serving clients with a sack lunch, the Soup Kitchen opened their dining room to guests on May 1. Saron is looking forward to resuming the preparation and serving of a hot meal on Thursday, May 26th.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving or to provide cookies, please use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665. Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers. *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:
Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Diane Madej (Open Hearts. Open Church): 231/670-0328 or dianemadej234@gmail.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

INTERFAITH ACTION

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

Check out the Interfaith news bulletins at swmichinterfaith.org/bulletins

Support

The Support Committee will be meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. Meetings will continue to be held on Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

OUTDOOR SPRING CLEANUP

Thanks to Brad Frey, Ed and Mary Alice Brunner, Jim Manore, and Pastor Joan and Jim Oleson, who helped with the Spring cleanup effort. A lot of branches were cleaned up, roof gutters cleaned, sweeping done, sweet gum tree balls removed and more! Now that it's nice and warm, we encourage you to enjoy the courtyard and fresh Spring air.

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
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A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER

DIAPER COLLECTION DRIVE FOR UNITED THROUGH MOTHERHOOD

The Outreach Committee and Church Council approved a new and relatively easy project for the congregation! **A diaper collection that will primarily benefit parents in the Benton Harbor area will take place at Saron during the months of June and September.** In addition, you may contribute baby wipes and diaper cream. Collection boxes will be placed in the Narthex and at the office entrance during those months.

Four local women recognized this tremendous need and established **United Through Motherhood** to reach out to area churches and non-profits to host diaper collections. Nearly half of the infants and toddlers in Michigan are living at or below the Federal Poverty Level. The cost of diapers ranges from $80-$100/month. Medicaid covers 46% of all Michigan births yet recipients of state and federal aid are prohibited from using those funds for disposable diapers. Lack of disposable diapers may prevent working moms or students from using daycare because they require a diaper supply.

Diapers, baby wipes and creams will be collected by United Through Motherhood and distributed at the Center for Better Health, 100 West Main Street, Benton Harbor, MI.

Let's over-fill our collection boxes in June! Questions? Call Karen Johnson at 269-313-9510.

JUNE 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee Pastor Out of Town →	**2** 9:30am Bible Study	**3**	4
5 Pentecost 10am Worship with Zoom Option **No Learning Hour for the Summer**	**6** 11am Prayer Group	**7** 6pm Bible Study	**8** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Deborah Circle	**9** 9:30am Bible Study	**10**	11
12 Holy Trinity 10am Worship with Zoom Option	**13** 11am Prayer Group	**14** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**15** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**16** 9:30am Bible Study **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**17**	18
19 10am Worship with Zoom Option	**20** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting	**21** 6pm Bible Study	**22** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**23** 9:30am Bible Study **Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen Day**	**24**	25
26 10am Worship with Zoom Option	**27** 11am Prayer Group	**28** 6pm Bible Study	**29** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**30** 9:30am Bible Study		